

# Cover Letters

**C**over letters serve as a bridge between your resume and the specific job to which you are applying. Therefore, there isn't a "one size fits all" cover letter. A cover letter is also a reflection of your writing skills, so take time and care to proofread and review your document. It needs to be specific to the organization and position—a generic cover letter will not help you.

## You Should Send a Cover Letter When:

- Applying through Go IRISH and the employer has requested it
- Responding to a job posting via direct mail or email
- Sending in response to a referral from a friend or acquaintance

## Guidelines

### Your Cover Letter Should Be:

- Formal, polished, and grammatically correct
- Precise, concise, cordial, and confident
- Written in the active voice
- Varied in sentence structure—don't begin all sentences with "I"
- Printed on the same type of paper as your resume
- Targeted to the needs of the company and requirements of the position
- A way of connecting the job description with your resume and skills

### Cover Letters Should be Addressed to a Specific Person

If you do not have a contact name:

- Investigate the company website and other online resources for contacts and addresses
- Call the company and request the name of the person responsible for hiring college graduates in your career area
- If all efforts fail—indicate a specific job title, such as Director of Public Relations and use a proper salutation such as "Dear Sir or Madam"

## Additional Tips

- Your cover letter should not be a repetition of the wording on your resume
- The font and formatting of your cover letter should match the font and formatting of your resume
- When sending a resume via email, you may follow the cover letter format to introduce your attached resume and put it into the body of the email (do not include the formal format with addresses and the date)
- The subject line for cover letters sent via email should have the position/job title and your full name
- Use the term "Enclosure" or "Enclosures" only if you are sending hard copies of your documents

## Content

### The First Paragraph—"Why Them?"

- States WHY you are writing
  - Responding to an advertised opening
  - Inquiring about a possible opening
- States WHY you are applying to, or are interested in, this employer
  - Company's training program
  - Company's product or service
  - Demonstrate your company research
- Mention your contact/referral if you have one

### The Second Paragraph—"Why You?"

- States WHAT qualifications you bring to the position
- Highlights two or three experiences or academic achievements that directly relate to the qualifications the employer is seeking
- Proves through examples of experiences and activities that you have key skills for the position—i.e. hard-work, communication, problem-solving ability, and analytical skills
- May close with a summary sentence of your qualifications and a confident statement that you can make a contribution to the organization

### The Third Paragraph—"Next Steps"

- States WHAT you WANT—an interview or an opportunity to further discuss your qualifications and any employment opportunities the employer may have
- May reference your enclosed resume
- Thanks the person and indicates that you look forward to speaking to or meeting with him/her, but indicates flexibility as to time and place
- Can state that you will call the contact person at a certain time/day to discuss scheduling a meeting or an interview

Please see Sample Cover Letters on page 40-43.

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**Contact The Career Center to  
schedule an appointment for a resume  
or cover letter review.**

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# Sample Cover Letter

1807 Construction Road  
Apartment #18  
Notre Dame, IN 46556

October 15, 2014

4 blank lines here

Mr. Phillip Sorrel  
Director of Sales  
ABC Corporation  
1 Industry Plaza  
Framington, NJ 20589

2 blank lines here

Dear Mr. Sorrel:

I recently spoke with Mr. Connors at the Fall Career Expo at the University of Notre Dame regarding career opportunities within the pharmaceutical industry, and he suggested I contact you. ABC Corporation's recent market expansion and use of the most current biotechnology in its products is particularly impressive. I am very interested in a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative position with your company and have enclosed my resume for your review.

My Science Business education has exposed me to principles of business—marketing, accounting, finance, and management—while also establishing the strong science foundation necessary in the pharmaceutical industry. As a marketing intern last summer, I applied and developed these skills in a corporate environment. Through interaction with clients ranging from computer hardware businesses to local grocers, I fostered strong communication skills and the ability to work with diverse customers. Additionally, I am committed to achieving results. For example, my new approach to marketing an on-campus community service program increased student participation by 25%. Given my goal-driven nature and desire to succeed, I am confident that I can make a positive contribution to your Sales Department.

I would like the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications and any sales opportunities within ABC Corporation. I will call you during the week of November 1 to see if we might schedule a convenient time to meet. I look forward to our conversation.

Sincerely,

4 blank lines here for  
signature

Mary Flint

Enclosure

Include if sending a  
hard copy of the letter  
and resume.

## Position Description

The Pharmaceutical Sales Representative is responsible for achieving sales goals and implementing company-approved programs within a (company assigned) geographically defined territory. This is accomplished by providing company-approved information and services to all classes of accounts such as physicians, retail pharmacies, hospitals, wholesalers, and managed care organizations. The Sales Representative is also responsible for coordinating sales strategies with appropriate teammates to maximize sales in territory.

Start out  
with the name of your  
referral if applicable

Show that  
you've done your research to  
keep the reader's interest

Keep the  
letter short and to the  
point. Be direct but courteous in  
the closing

Draw  
attention to  
relevant skills, as defined by  
the job description, and dem-  
onstrate when and how you  
have used them

# Sample Cover Letter

August 22, 2014

Ms. Kim Dean  
University Relations Specialist  
CIGNA Corporation  
900 Cottage Grove Road, A-122  
Hartford, CT 06152

## Position Description

Chart your course for success in a fast-paced learning environment and get set to become a top-performing account manager in the group insurance segment of the employee benefits industry. Highly motivated and results-driven recent grads and early-career professionals will experience on-the-job and classroom training, coaching and mentoring as part of CIGNA Group Insurance's Leadership Development Program.

Dear Ms. Dean:

Address your letter to a specific person

Immediately state the purpose of your letter

Please consider my enclosed resume for the CIGNA Leadership Development Program. Currently, I am a senior majoring in marketing at the University of Notre Dame. The qualities I have to offer CIGNA in this program include:

Use this format to draw attention to specific skills and show when and how you have used them

- **An achiever with outstanding interpersonal skills:** While working as an intern at XYZ Company, I was selected for the marketing strategy team that partnered to increase revenue by 41% and customer base by 20%. Prior to attending Notre Dame, I volunteered for a local non-profit organization where I worked with clients from different cultures. Based on my contributions and commitment to the organization, I earned recognition as "Volunteer of the Month."
- **Demonstrated leader and team player:** I co-founded a student organization aimed at increasing community service involvement campus-wide. Over the past three years, we have been able to generate a 32% increase in student participation, and have made valuable contributions to the community. I also served as a Resident Assistant in one of the University's largest residence halls while achieving a 3.59 GPA in my classes.
- **Excellent analytical and quantitative abilities:** In a team-based business simulation, I continuously analyzed the market and our competition for a financial services firm throughout the semester. The professor acknowledged our final project as being "an outstanding example for future classes." Last summer as an intern, I participated in a cross-functional team to assess a proposed business venture expanding customer product offerings.

CIGNA is a long-time leader in providing full-service solutions. Through this approach, the company has continued to expand its client base and market position for more than 125 years. Specifically, your mission to help people lead healthier, more secure lives matches my own personal values and interests, as demonstrated through my community service efforts.

I am committed to adding value and contributing to CIGNA's global expansion. Please consider placing me on your interview schedule during your campus visit. Thank you in advance for your consideration. If you have questions prior to your visit, please feel free to contact me at (574) 258-5555.

Sincerely,

*Peter Smith*

Peter Smith

Demonstrate your research and knowledge of the company and express your enthusiasm and interest

# Sample Cover Letter

123 Notre Dame Ave  
Notre Dame, IN 46556

February 12, 2014

Mr. Joe Irish  
Lilly Corporate Center  
Indianapolis, IN 46285

Dear Mr. Irish:

As a senior Accounting and Economics double major at the University of Notre Dame, I am seeking a full-time position that will utilize my strong communication and analytical skills. From the research I have conducted on Go IRISH and through contact with Ms. Eileen Froehlke, I am interested in pursuing Lilly's associate tax analyst opportunity. What has especially drawn my attention to Lilly is its drive and dedication towards research and development and meeting needs that have been previously unmet in the medical field. As well, Lilly's expectations of high integrity and respect for all the people the corporation serves impressed me.

As a tax consultant intern for True Partners Consulting, I worked extensively in researching Section 199 and other complex tax deductions for our clients. I created templates for future use in evaluating the availability of specific deductions and also generated a methodology for the analysis of fixed assets for tax purposes. As an international tax intern for Zimmer, Inc., I was able to learn the foundations of the U.S. and foreign tax structures and experience first hand the importance of tax solutions in a *Fortune* 500 company.

In my Principles of Marketing class, I led a team of eight through a semester-long project which followed a product through the entire marketing process and resulted in a 200-page report and 20 minute presentation. I led discussions, critiqued my team members' work, and motivated them to produce the best work possible. Outside of my academic and work experiences, I served as the Community Service Coordinator for the Black Cultural Arts Council and fostered a relationship with the Robinson Community Learning Center establishing community service activities for our club.

Accompanying this cover letter is my resume, which I also submitted through Go IRISH for your review. I would like the opportunity to further discuss with you the associate tax analyst position and my qualifications. I noted that Lilly will be conducting on-campus interviews and hope to talk with you sometime before then. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Anthony Hermann*

Anthony Hermann

## Position Description

As an Associate Financial Analyst, you will experience an exciting career offering a wide range of opportunities for professional development, including the two-year Lilly Initial Financial Experience ("LIFE") training program. By strengthening your skills through a variety of financial assignments, you will deepen your financial expertise, learn and contribute to the business, and impact patients through your work in finance.

Immediately  
state why you are interested in  
the company and position

Highlight  
relevant skills  
gained through  
specific internship  
and academic  
experience

When applicable, state that you  
have applied on Go IRISH, and indicate interest in  
obtaining an on-campus interview

# Sample Cover Letter—Email Format

Full-time Marketing Position Inquiry

Message Options

To: mary.domer@underarmour.com

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject: Full-time Marketing Position Inquiry

Dear Ms. Domer:

I recently learned of Under Armour's full-time positions through Mr. Lee Svete, Director of Notre Dame's Career Center, and I am very interested in this opportunity. My previous corporate internship experience, extra-curricular activities, competitive drive, and passion for athletics make me a strong candidate for this position.

While working as a business analyst intern for Target Inc. in Men's softlines this previous summer, I developed several important skills required by this competitive corporate setting: fast-paced learning, dedication, creativity, and the ability to work as part of a team. Through partnering and individual critical thinking skills, my intern team presented an actionable inventory strategy to the division upon completion of the internship.

As an intern in Liz Claiborne's International Marketing Division during the summer of 2010, I worked with several cross-functional teams. These interactions were the most rewarding experiences of this internship, giving me the opportunity to effectively communicate with, and learn from, a diverse group of professionals.

Serving as the Director of Marketing for the Student International Business Council has given me the opportunity to explore my interests while applying classroom skills to real world business modules. In this challenging leadership position, I successfully led marketing projects with major companies, developing strategies and providing market research for future implementation. Through these experiences, my interpersonal skills, specifically my presentation and communication abilities, have been strengthened. With focus, time management, and determination, I have also maintained an accomplished academic record at Notre Dame.

Becoming a part of Under Armour and representing the brand preferred by today's athletes is an exciting opportunity. I look forward to discussing Under Armour's full-time positions with you at a later date. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Mary O'Connor  
(555) 555-5555  
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/moconnor>

It is acceptable to leave closing open-ended, but generally better to retain control by asking for a specific appointment

Use short paragraphs to highlight specific skills and experience

After mentioning your referral, make a strong statement about why the person should continue reading your letter